

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4718

INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

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CINCLANT FOR POLAD

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TAGS :AFOR,MILI,SF,UK

SUBJ :CALM SOUTH AFRICAN REACTION TO END OF SIMONSTOWN TREATY

1. SOUTH AFRICAN REACTION TO LONG EXPECTED ANNOUNCEMENT OF
TERMINATION OF SIMONSTOWN AGREEMENT HAS BEEN ONE OF GENERAL UNCONCERN

BOTH PRESS AND GOVERNMENT HAVE POINTED OUT THAT END OF
TREATY DOES NOT SIGNIFY RUPTURE OF SOUTH AFRICA'S
HISTORIC NAVAL ASSOCIATION WITH UK. MINDEFENSE P.W.BOTHA
TOLD HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY JUNE 16 THAT UK WILL STILL BE ABLE
TO USE SIMONSTOWN FACILITIES ON SAME BASIS AS NAVIES OF
OTHER FRIENDLY COUNTRIES. HE ALSO RELEASED LETTER FROM
BRITISH AMBASSADOR BOTTOMLEY EXPRESSING WILLINGNESS TO
CONTINUE DISCUSSING THROUGH MILITARY OR DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS
QUESTIONS WHICH MIGHT ARISE 'ABOUT PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS
AFFECTING EITHER SOUTH AFRICAN NAVY OR ROYAL NAVY.'

2. REFLECTING FACT THAT MOST WHITE SOUTH AFRICANS TAKE
DEFENSE MATTERS VERY SERIOUSLY AND DO NOT WISH TO SEE
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SUCH ISSUES BECOME TOPICS OF PARTISAN POLITICS,GOVERNMENT'S

POLITICAL OPPONENTS HAVE ACCEPTED UK ACTION AS, IN WORDS
OF UNITED PARTY'S SPOKESMAN, 'NEITHER UNEXPECTED NOR
REGRETTED.

3. AFRIKAANS-LANGUAGE DIE BURGER EXPRESSED SENTIMENTS OF
MOST AFRIKAANS PRESS WHEN IT EDITORIALIZED THAT END OF
AGREEMENT 'CAUSES NO TEARS TO BE SHED' AND WILL CLEAR THE
AIR IN SA-UK RELATIONS. EVEN NORMALLY CRITICAL ENGLISH-
LANGUAGE PRESS HAS EDITORIALIZED THAT UK'S DOMESTIC
PROBLEMS AND RETREAT FROM WORLD RESPONSIBILITY WOULD HAVE
MEANT AN END TO SIMONSTOWN ACCORD AT SOME POINT EVEN
WITHOUT FACTOR OF ANTI-APARTHEID PRESSURE ON LABOR
GOVERNMENT. EDITORIALS HAVE NOTED THAT PERHAPS OTHER COUNTRIES,
NOTABLY THE U.S. AND FRANCE,
WILL FILL BRITISH VOID.

4. RAPPORT, LARGEST CIRCULATION AFRIKAANS SUNDAY NEWSPAPER,
REPORTED JUNE 15 THAT MINDEFENSE BOTHA WAS ANGERED BY
MININFORMATION MULDER'S REMARKS TO NATIONAL PRESS CLUB IN
WASHINGTON IN WHICH HE SEEMED TO INVITE U.S. TO TAKE OVER BRITAIN'S
SIMONSTOWN BASE.

RAPPORT CLAIMED THAT BOTHA WAS IRKED AT HIS LONGSTANDING
INTRAPARTY RIVAL NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF HIS ALLEGED
INTRUSION INTO DEFENSE BAILIWICK BUT ALSO BECAUSE THE
OFFER MULDER REPORTEDLY MADE TO US AUDIENCE IS CONTRARY
TO SAF POLICY. (IN ANNOUNCING SIMONSTOWN AGREEMENT TERMINATION
TO PARLIAMENT ON JUNE 16, BOTHA SAID THAT SAF POLICY IS TO OPEN SIMON
STOWN TO ALL FRIENDLY
NATIONS BUT NEVER AGAIN SHARE CONTROL OF IT AS WAS CASE IN
UK-SA SIMONSTOWN TREATY.)

5. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING TEXT OF MULDER'S
SPEECH TO NATIONAL PRESS CLUB IN WASHINGTON.

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